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American Dental Hygienists' Association
Connecticut Dental Hygienists' Association
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Sigma Phi Alpha

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Senator Jonathan A. Harris(D)
Representative Elizabeth B. Ritter (R)
Public Health Committee Members

***To the attention of Senator Harris, Rep Ritter and Members of
the Public Health Committee:***

My name is Leslie Andrews and I am a registered dental hygienist. I have been practicing dental hygiene for eighteen years here in Connecticut.

We have an opportunity to pass landmark legislation in Connecticut. The position of the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) has been meticulously crafted by dental hygiene leaders which include Educators and Clinicians, both in private practice as well as public health.

The facts are all too well known: severe lack of oral health care together with fewer dentists graduating each year. In addition, dentists are not all practicing in the areas where they are needed most, the areas with the greatest absence of dental facilities.

The ADHP was specifically designed to help fill this huge gap and this great need. In Connecticut, dental hygienists already provide preventive services in public health facilities such as schools, clinics and mobile vans. This has enabled thousands of patients to receive preventive care which has reduced the prevalence of more advanced dental disease - more costly to treat at its later stages. Scientific evidence supports the fact that dental diseases increase the risk for systemic disease such as diabetes, heart disease and pre term low birth weight infants. So, preventing dental diseases also have a positive impact on overall health.

The proposed "mid level" dental hygienist will provide primary oral health care, and have competence and experience working with a variety of patients including special needs, at risk and those with limited access to care.

It is a logical and real solution for an ADHP to overcome the growing number of barriers to access to dental care (socio-economic, lack of education, lack of transportation, special needs, and advancing age, to name a few).

You may hear of other suggested mid level providers such as the Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) and Oral Preventive Assistant (OPA) which may help but, the bottom line is that they are NOT able to work without a dentist present on the premises. Clearly, this does not address the concerns outlined above.

I urge to support legislation for the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner.

Thank you,

Leslie Andrews, RDH, MBA